



THE BULLETIN OF

The Institute of Child Study

Vol. 19, No. 1 (72)

March, 1957

Parent Education Conference

PARENT EDUCATION TODAY

WORKSHOP REPORTS

INSIGHT INTO PARENTHOOD

W. E. BLATZ

BOOK REVIEWS

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

\$1.00 per year

Single copies, 25 cents

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155 E. Ohio Street

THE BULLETIN OF THE INSTITUTE OF CHILD STUDY is published four times a year at 45 Walmer Road, Toronto, under the direction of an editorial committee of the Institute of Child Study at the University of Toronto.

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Single subscriptions, \$1.00 per year.

Please make cheques payable to the University of Toronto and add bank exchange to out-of-town cheques.

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The writing, editing, and secretarial work on THE BULLETIN are part of the defined activities of staff members of The Institute of Child Study and as such are financed through the Federal Health Grant project 605-5-147.

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Parent Education Today*

THEME OF THE FIRST CONFERENCE SESSION

PARENT EDUCATION has had a long history. For centuries it took the form of passing on from generation to generation ideas and methods of child management and training. However, about eighty years ago attempts were made to make use of accumulating knowledge and insight about human nature and conduct. One of the earliest organizations to do this was the Child Study Association of America.

Throughout its history, parent education has been largely a voluntary effort and not a part of formal educational systems. With a few exceptions, it has struggled along without government support and depended on people who had other work to do; thus, parent education has been a kind of part-time, secondary effort. Some of us believe that parent education has an important part to play in our culture and that it deserves a more central and secure place in the educational picture. We believe that sound parent education should be available for all parents who want it.

In order to be sound and effective, parent education must provide the kinds of experiences for parents which will make them more comfortable, more effective, and less confused. Not all parent education efforts have fitted this picture. Sometimes such efforts have confused parents, increased their worry, and made them feel less confident and secure. Differences in theoretical approach are to be expected, but controversy over theory is out of place in parent education classes. We are beginning to see that we do our best work with parents when we are helping them to clarify their own objectives and to think through and solve their own problems with the help of knowledge of how children grow, develop, and learn. Parent education today is healthy because we are honest enough to look at our failures, because we are still learning, and because we are adventurers. We can look forward to a future in which parent education will be even more effective than it has been in the past.

KARL S. BERNHARDT

*This BULLETIN records the proceedings of the Parent Education Conference held at the Institute in September 1956. About 160 people registered and were workers in parent education from metropolitan Toronto as well as visitors from other centres in Ontario, from Montreal and from New York.

Workshop Reports

APPROACHES AND METHODS IN DEVELOPING COMMUNITY PROGRAMS IN PARENT EDUCATION

Chairman: DR. REVA GERSTEIN, President, National Council of Jewish Women of Canada, Toronto.

Discussants: MRS. LILLIAN CAMPBELL, London representative to the Nursery Education Association of Ontario; MRS. M. MENAGH, Psychologist, Child Adjustment Services, Toronto Board of Education; MRS. V. WILKINSON, Past Chairman of Parent Education, Toronto Home and School Council.

MEMBERS participating in this group represented local and regional Home and School Associations (some that had been long established and others that were newly organized or in new communities), day care centres, nursery schools, church groups, the Society for Crippled Children. Representation thus indicated the variety of community organizations that are actively interested in parent education.

Some general questions about parent education were given thought: "Why do we feel we have to educate all parents?"; "What are we educating parents for?"; "Do parents feel that parent educators are *trespassing* on their own particular field?"; "Are parent study groups good from a mental health point of view for young mothers who are tied to their children all day long?"; "How much do people learn from study groups?" It was felt that parents of nursery school children seemed to enjoy study groups though change in their children was not noted. The difficulty in evaluating change in parental attitude was recognized. A common concern was expressed by such questions as: "Why don't we reach more people?"; "Do the people who come to study groups really need the help most?"; "How can we reach the hundreds of parents who want help and are afraid to admit it?" It was agreed that parents must *want* to look at their problems. The "one-night stand" was discussed in some detail as a method of interesting parents in a study group. The importance of meeting parents' expressed needs and interests was stressed; one method of ascertaining interests is to note the free pamphlets (such as those from National Health and Welfare) that are taken away at a general meeting.

Home and School Association representatives spoke of the fluctuating interest in study groups over a period of years in some schools, of the difficulties of others in organizing study groups, of the complete ignorance of many that there was such a thing as parent education. Many Home and School people are working earnestly to promote parent education without a clear idea as to its goals and methods, and therefore clarification of what parent education is and what it hopes to achieve will help these people to work more effectively. The lack of continuity in personnel from year to year was considered to be a serious hindrance to the growth

of parent education. Voluntary organizations need to consider this in planning. Enthusiasm was expressed that a program of parent education in elementary schools is being considered, to be sponsored by a school board in co-operation with Home and School.

GROUP EDUCATION WITH PARENTS OF HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

Chairman: MISS DOROTHY MILLICHAMP, Assistant Director, Institute of Child Study.

Discussants: MISS HELEN DE LAPORTE, Director, De Laporte Educational Clinic; MISS ELIZABETH MORROW, Hospital for Sick Children, Nursing Staff; MISS C. MYERS, Social Worker, Cerebral Palsy Training School and Clinic, Toronto; MISS D. WEAVER, Pre-school Education Department, Canadian National Institute for the Blind, Toronto.

THIS GROUP began by setting the stage for their discussion. Parent education was accepted as a mental health service working toward the well-being of the child and his home. The approach of parent education was defined as supporting and helping parents in their role of parenthood.

It was agreed that the handicapped child and his parents should not be set apart in our thoughts as different from other children and their parents but rather thought of as children and parents who "belong" and who have particular needs. So, the goal of parent education for the handicapped does not change—it remains that of development in mental well-being for child, parent, and home. However, parent education must learn how to give service in terms of the special circumstances accompanying the handicap, as it must always adapt to the needs of each individual child and his home.

The group opened discussion by envisioning these special needs:

1. Parents of handicapped children are particularly burdened with worry, anxiety, feelings of frustration, and rebellion at the situation in which they find themselves. Added to these are worry about extra expense, and the mental and physical fatigue resulting from continued strain of supervision and care.

2. Parents of handicapped children feel particularly isolated and alone. Neighbourly friendliness is often denied to them. A parent group may be able to help a parent by offering friendly support. The sharing of experiences and frustrations is most helpful to individual members, and may be the means of parents growing to *accept* the handicapped child. Parents gain support through group experience in meeting community attitudes towards handicaps.

3. To deal effectively with handicapped children, it is essential to understand the handicap condition and the limits as well as the possibilities of each individual child. It is believed that the sharing of knowledge and experiences may give broader understanding of disabilities.

4. A parent's emotional involvement with the handicapped child may prevent him from seeing the readiness of the child for further learning and for such experiences which come to normal children without direct planning but which require special thought and planning in the case of handicapped children. For example, freedom of movement and a chance to explore varied materials are taken for granted with normal children. Yet a group of preschool cerebral-palsied children could get this opportunity only when they were laid on the floor to experience freedom of movement; and boxes of odds and ends had to be collected and placed beside these children in order to give them the experiences which normal children take for themselves.

5. Parents need to be helped to understand what the child may experience *because* of his handicap, e.g. insults, name-calling, and to interpret and give guidance that will develop a healthy personality to the optimum degree.

6. Parents of handicapped children need help in thinking and planning ahead for coming stages and difficulties that may be expected in the child's development. They can be helped to avoid an overprotective attitude, which can have such long-lasting consequences for the mental health of both parent and child. The future of the child needs to be envisaged and planned for.

7. Members of the workshop felt that *the whole family is affected by a handicapped child*. Parents need help in seeing this and in considering the development of each member. The mother and father need to be helped to see the part they must both play in the general guidance of the child and in the treatment they can share; a broken home is often the result of failure of parents to work together. Sometimes parents neglect other children in the family and need help in understanding their needs and how they are affected by the handicapped member. Sometimes the handicapped child is removed from the home for a short time while other family relationships can be planned for positively, though this is done only as a last resort and when all else has failed in saving the situation for parents and siblings.

With this listing of child and parent needs in front of them as reference, the group members then turned their attention to ways and means of arranging a parent education service designed to meet these needs.

Leadership for parent groups was discussed at some length by workshop members. Familiarity with one kind of handicap would be of great advantage to a leader in working with parents of children handicapped in another way. The leader can of course get help from experts in various handicaps and from the literature that is available. She should be acquainted with community resources. She should understand that parents are getting individual help from the staff at the clinic; there

should of course be close co-operation between all who are working with the child and parent.

Organization of groups was then considered, and all members stressed the importance of involving both parents from the beginning, either in group or in individual sessions. Usually it is the mother who attends the group meetings and visits the clinic. Fathers can sometimes become interested in making special equipment for specific handicaps. It was stressed that parents should be interviewed before enrolling in groups; some parents may feel more comfortable in individual sessions until they are emotionally ready for the group experience. In answer to the question as to who should organize the groups, members seemed to agree that the impetus usually comes from the parents themselves, and that the clinic or agency may then assist in the planning and execution of the project. Parents of children with a *variety* of handicaps can be satisfactorily or even advantageously organized together in groups; many problems and principles in guidance are common to all. Groups should be kept small in number to allow for individual expression of concerns and interests. Individual help will still be necessary along with the group experience, such help to be given at the clinic and through home visits.

As usual in a busy group, discussion ended in mid-stream, and breakup chatting concerned enthusiastic plans for parent education workers and those working professionally with the handicapped child to meet together again soon.

CONTENT FOR PARENT EDUCATION GROUPS

Chairman: MRS. S. J. ALLIN, Parent Education Associates, Toronto.

Discussants: MRS. G. C. IRVINE, President, Ontario Federation of Home and School Associations; MRS. MARION KIFT, Parent Education Leader, Montreal, Que.; MRS. J. ROTENBERG, Principal, Hillcrest Progressive School, Toronto.

IT BECAME apparent quickly in the session that though all members were interested in helping parents, a few were faced with immediate problems of organizing meetings and discussion groups. Others expressed less specific needs, such as "We want to hear what others are doing."

The leader suggested that the group decide upon topics of common interest that should be discussed during the limited time available. The members chose to discuss: (a) The content and procedure of a study group of six to eight sessions, (b) Leaderless groups, (c) Methods of attracting parents to parent education groups.

(a) *Content and procedure of a study group of six to eight sessions.* It was decided that the content of such a study group often included: Information about child development interpreted in terms of the individual; clarification of parental goals; social relationships (including sex); play and the use of leisure time; emotional development; discipline;

responsibility; "character building." It was agreed that such a "course" should not be "imposed" on the group but rather be flexible and meet the needs of the group.

(b) *Leaderless groups.* This topic was of limited interest to the group as a whole. Discussants pointed out that leaderless groups might result in a mere "sharing of ignorance" and that there were advantages in having trained leaders. It was felt that while it was most desirable to have a trained leader, a group which has had a series under such a leader might continue for a short period on its own. However, sooner or later a new series with leadership might be felt necessary to give added impetus.

(c) *Methods of attracting parents to parent education groups.* This was of special interest to many members. The discussion centred on the "content" of open meetings (mainly Home and School). The group shared descriptions of meetings in action, and many details as to the use of films, plays, buzz sessions, seating arrangements, handling of open discussion from the floor.

It was stressed by the discussants that large open meetings need special skill to involve the audience in active participation and the leader of such a group should be chosen with this in mind.

The workshop broke up on the following note of encouragement; "Home and School conveners should not become too easily discouraged, since the effectiveness of parent education is difficult to measure. More 'good' may be accomplished than may appear on the surface."

LEADERSHIP TRAINING FOR PARENT EDUCATION LEADERS

Chairman: MRS. HARRY JOHNSON, Supervisor, Parent Education, Institute of Child Study.

Discussants: MRS. ALINE AUERBACH, Child Study Association of America, New York City, N.Y.; MRS. JOSEPH BROOKS, Parent Education Convenor, Ontario Home and School Council; MRS. KAY CALDER, Director, Parent Education, Mental Hygiene Institute, Montreal, Que.; MISS P. MERRILL, President, Child Guidance League, Brooklyn, N.Y.

AS A TAKING-OFF POINT for discussion the four discussants and the chairman outlined briefly the content of the leadership training programs offered by the organizations they represented. Two organizations were involved in lay leader training and three in professional training. Of the latter, the students in one centre are already trained in other professions and desire parent education as an added skill. In another centre the students all have a background of psychiatry, psychology, or social work. In still another the prerequisite to the course is a university degree, and here most of the students are parents. The two organizations concerned with lay leader training accept students with varied backgrounds which often include university and professional training. In all centres applicants to the courses are carefully screened.

The mention of screening led to a lively discussion as to what qualities of personality were essential for parent education leaders; the group agreed on warmth, understanding, and sensitivity to people.

There was general agreement as to content of training courses. Each centre offered a background of theory which would familiarize the students with family living and principles of child guidance. The centres which gave professional training included a course on child development; students in one centre in addition studied research methods and were given some practical experience with research and with children in a nursery school.

In all centres, students were given an opportunity to observe parent discussion groups and to evaluate these observations in seminar with the leader. In all centres, students were afforded an opportunity to become thoroughly familiar with current techniques of leadership, with parent education materials, such as literature, films, and plays. All had practice in preparing material for group presentation with the help of an advisor; some used the students themselves as a practice group in order to assess the material prepared. All but one program offered experience in the field: the students led groups under supervision with an opportunity to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of their presentation with a supervisor. The extent of practice under supervision varied widely as did the breadth of knowledge of theory and background material which were required.

Lively discussion centred around the relative importance of grounding in theory, techniques of leadership, and practice in group leading. The group was in agreement that practice was essential, but seemed unable to decide which was more important during the training period: an emphasis on background of knowledge or on acquisition of skills in presenting material. Some favoured an emphasis on skills and felt that knowledge could be acquired through reading. Others felt that skill in presentation was ineffective without a broad background of knowledge.

EVALUATION OF PARENT EDUCATION METHODS AND TECHNIQUES

Chairman: DR. MARGERY KING, Executive Director, Toronto Branch, Canadian Mental Health Association.

Discussants: MRS. W. E. HENRY, MRS. S. HETHERINGTON, MRS. G. C. V. HEWSON, and MRS. H. E. WITTICK, all of the Parent Education Associates, Toronto.

THE MEANING of the word "education" was considered first by the group, who felt it implied "drawing out" the resources of the group itself rather than "telling." Members felt it essential to discuss the aims of parent education, since on these aims would depend the methods and techniques used. These aims are:

1. To help parents to clarify their own approach to child rearing;
2. To improve parents' skills in their relationships with their children, by helping them to understand themselves and the role they play in the development of family life;

3. To help parents to be more comfortable with their own attitudes through increased understanding both intellectually and emotionally.

In discussing these aims, the group spent a good deal of time in clarifying the term "comfortable." The general feeling was that only where there is a recognition of one's own attitudes and feelings is it possible to understand and accept the part that they play in the development of one's relationship to his children. It was felt that through group discussion feelings and attitudes could be explored in such a way that they could be utilized in the educational process; at the same time care must be taken not to create in parents a feeling of anxiety.

Another point for clarification that arose out of the discussion of aims was whether parent education was concerned primarily with parents or with children. It was agreed that while the ultimate aim was to help children to a fuller and happier development, helping parents to be "better" parents will, in the long run, benefit children.

It was generally agreed that the many methods and techniques of parent education would be determined largely by the aims of the specific group. The discussion group, individual counselling, and the "one-night stand" were selected for consideration at this workshop.

1. *Group discussion.* Attention was given to the strengths and weaknesses of the process, or member-centred group, and the didactic, leader-centred group. The latter "content" group assumes that if parents have an understanding of what should be done, they will be able to carry this into action. The "process" group, on the other hand, has as its objective that parents should understand their own feelings and emotions in order to be able to practise what they know or learn about child development. Aims and objectives of the "process" group should be understood by the leader and the organizer in order that the needs of the parents may be met. The leader is responsible for the framework but the goal of the group members may change in the developing process of the group. The leader has a responsibility to summarize what has been said and the individual member may take from this summary the information that will help him to understand his own problem.

2. *Individual counselling.* It was pointed out that in some kinds of work, e.g. in agencies concerned with working parents, it was not feasible to bring parents together in groups. The use of individual counselling, where the parent could chat with the supervisor while calling for her child and discuss the problems of the moment as well as the long-range view, was considered most important.

3. *The "one-night-stand."* In some organizations the topic "parent-education" appears once a year in general meetings. It was stressed that where there is no opportunity for "follow-up" the skill of the speaker is most important. A positive practical approach can encourage the audience to wish to talk the subject over further and can lead to the formation of a group. However, there is danger of misunderstanding and of arousing anxiety which may be impossible to clear up in a large meeting.

PARENT EDUCATION IN THE NURSERY SCHOOL

Leaders: MISS M. FLETCHER, Principal of the Nursery School, Institute of Child Study; MRS. E. BOLTON, teacher in Preschool Education at Ryerson Institute of Technology.

Discussants: MISS B. CURREY, The Briars Nursery School, St. Catharines, Ont.; MRS. D. DOTCH, Vaughan Road Cooperative Nursery School, Toronto; MISS D. MEDHURST, Y.M.H.A. Nursery School, Toronto; MISS D. SHORT, City Day Nursery, Toronto.

(This report is a synthesis of the minutes of the two groups.)

MEMBERS of the workshop were supervisors of nursery schools (private, co-operative, and welfare agency), day nurseries, nurseries for handicapped children, and supervisors of church weekday programs.

It was agreed immediately that the nursery school does have a responsibility for carrying on parent education by helping parents (1) to gain information about the program and aims of the school and (2) to understand how the nursery teacher works with the children in order to achieve those aims. The well trained nursery teacher is qualified to participate in such a program of parent education. A third objective was to give parents help and encouragement in dealing with their own problems. To this end it was felt important that nursery school supervisors should gain the necessary experience and training to equip themselves for this responsibility. A variety of training courses are available to extend qualifications and build increased knowledge and skill.

The individual interview with parents was felt to be an important method of parent education in the nursery school setting. There are many opportunities for parent-teacher interchange of information about the child and his progress, activities, and achievements in the casual day-to-day contacts occurring as the parent delivers or calls for the child. Through these almost daily brief contacts the parent becomes assured of the teacher's interest in the child and learns to feel at ease with the teacher and free to ask for specific information when the need arises. It was emphasized that the teacher should recognize that she is not qualified to deal with problems involving personality difficulties or relationships between parents but should be familiar with sources of help to which she may refer difficulties that do not involve the child directly.

The planned interview with the parent is used in some schools before

the child begins to attend; in others an interview may be arranged once each term. Some schools plan that the interview be held at the home, especially when the child comes and goes by taxi and there is no opportunity for briefer more casual contacts. Teachers of handicapped children pointed out that there is need for frequent interviews both at home and school to discuss the child's activities in both spheres. Many schools are recognizing the value of this aspect of nursery school and are trying to free staff time for this purpose.

Parent observations in the nursery school were felt to be another important method of parent education. Though parents should have the opportunity at least once a year to observe, arrangements are especially difficult to make in day nurseries where parents can come only on their day off, or between jobs. In order to reach fathers, some nurseries have remained open longer during the evening or have run a Saturday morning session so that fathers too may have a chance to see the nursery school program. An important aspect of the observations is to have a staff member free to talk with the parents, to answer questions, to point out the significance of child behaviour or teacher direction. Several parents often observe together with one teacher as a guide. In this case, a discussion period can be arranged along with the observation while the children are playing outdoors. When the discussion precedes the observation, parents may be directed to watch for certain points. Unless there are observation screens, it seems wise to have the parent observing the total program, rather than her own child in the nursery setting, when a true picture may not be presented. The experience of many seemed to indicate that most children carry on their usual activities and are not disturbed in the presence of a group of adults seated well back in the room. However, it is essential for the nursery teacher to feel confident, for nervousness may be reflected in the children's behaviour. One school has worked with observation forms for parents; it was agreed that more experimenting needs to be done with this method. Another school used a "basic philosophy sheet" in helping to clarify observations.

Sometimes parents do not spontaneously ask for interviews or observations and teachers look for ways to encourage them to visit the school. It was stressed that a relationship of trust and confidence between parent and teacher is essential to the optimum adjustment of the child in school life. A parent may be asked to come and share in celebrations when a child has a birthday on a school day and thus develop an interest in the program. An attractive bulletin board displaying interesting news items, or a display of good pamphlets are "interest catchers" as is a direct appeal to parents (fathers as well as mothers) for help in maintaining equipment. A call for particular items for use in a school project is often gladly met by parents and is a means of stimulating real interest.

Parent participation in the school program such as in co-operative nursery schools was agreed to be the most effective means of building interest and understanding of the nursery school. Observations, lectures and discussions, and finally supervised practice, form the customary training procedure of participating parents. However, even in nurseries that are not "co-operative," there was found to be a variety of ways in which parents participated; they were often pressed into service when the school was short-staffed; they helped as a matter of course in the "dressing-to-go-home" routine. The parent of the handicapped child gradually moved about the room and away from her child, "helping the teacher," and thus beginning the emancipation of her child from her own constant care. One day nursery encourages the parents to participate in the program when they have the time (such as when out of work), either with the children, or with the kitchen or housekeeping staff—wherever they will enjoy the activity and feel comfortable.

Parent group education is not simply a matter of arranging a good program; parents must be made aware that there is knowledge to be gained about children and must also want to avail themselves of this knowledge. Where parents take a voluntarily active part in the program, interest is keener than where the school attempts to draw the parents into a program. In some schools, mothers and fathers take executive positions in the parents' council with the teacher acting in an advisory capacity only. One school reported almost too many parent-planned programs! A program that meets the parents' interests is essential; the program which is planned by the parents, or arranged on the basis of questions gathered from parents, may furnish topics of keen interest. Careful planning and publicity are also important in stimulating interest; this probably means fewer meetings but higher attendance. An initial meeting designed as a social get-together, at which the school aims or program could be discussed, serves as a good beginning meeting. Some group members thought that parents feel more comfortable if content is presented directly in the early meetings; later on they grow more easy and ready for a freer, discussion-type meeting. Some of the half-day nursery schools used "tea-meetings" successfully. The day nurseries usually find evening meetings inconvenient for parents and have tried supper or box supper meetings at the end of which parents took their children home from the nursery. Slides, films, or tape recordings of the children in school are always enjoyed by the parents, as is usually a workshop night when parents gain insight into the value of nursery creative materials through having a chance to use them. Films are enjoyed by parents and timely displays of equipment, creative materials, books, and toys (both commercial and home-made) meet strong interests of parents of preschool children.

Insight into Parenthood*

W. E. BLATZ

ONE OF THE GREATEST present-day parental concerns is delinquency; parents worry lest their children become delinquent. From time immemorial, children have manifested delinquency, such as stealing and lying, which parents cannot accept. But there are some kinds of delinquency or non-conformity that we do accept—delinquency in the sense of daring to be different, not being afraid to fight injustice, poor living conditions, the unnecessary restrictions such as are often laid down in music, drama, and art. It is interesting that when a group of parents list the characteristics of the “ideal person” and are asked, “Would you like to live with such a person?” they reply with an emphatic “No!”

Living with people is one of the joys of life, but it is something young children have to learn. Growing up and becoming social is far from simple, and the study of children and the way they do grow up is very difficult.

In studying children, we need to ask “What does the infant bring into the world? What is his equipment; what are his assets and liabilities?” One often hears people say “Treat each child differently because each child is different.” What does this mean? How do we know?

Infants look different—one from the other. Does this mean that the differences are such that they will ensure that the child will have a pleasant or unpleasant personality—be industrious or lazy—have integrity or turpitude? One school of thought says “You are born. Here you are, heaven help you. No matter what you do, what will happen is unalterable.” Another approach postulates that the only kind of difference in infants is quantitative: some infants are heavier, hungrier, brighter than others. If one belongs to the school that believes the latter, he can function as an educator! The technique he uses is that of taking what the child has and modifying it. The child is born with infinite possibilities for modification; these possibilities have not as yet been completely explored. Further, not all children have the same kind of capacities. But with the same effort, some children can reach a given goal more quickly than others. These capacities we cannot alter. But the difference is quantitative, not qualitative.

What is the equipment the child possesses that enables him to learn and to which we can give direction? The child is born with basic motives:

*A condensation of the address given at the final Conference session.

appetites, attitudes, and emotions.* Of these we can recognize six as being important if not essential to social behaviour: attitudes (like and dislike), the appetites of sex and change, and the emotions (fear and anger). The child grows up and discovers for himself that these six may be satisfied in a social way, i.e. in contact with other human beings. The child takes about two years to learn that another human being is exciting (appetite of change), that another person can give solace (fear) or be an exciting opponent (anger); that he can be liked or disliked (attitudes); and to conclude that he himself is a human being.

In the process of growing from infancy through preschool, elementary school and adolescent years to adulthood, the individual learns to want, and in trying to satisfy his wants, he learns, and acquires skills. And although he does not at all times know exactly what he wants, he knows, more or less, when he gets it, whether or not he wants it now. He often wants something and finds after he gets it that he *doesn't* want it. This is a mistake in judgment, but in no way invalidates the fundamental concept that through wanting, striving, achieving, the individual grows and develops.

But when an individual wants a thing, strives for it, and upon attainment is satisfied, he learns to *like* this particular thing. Similarly he learns to *dislike* those things that do not afford him satisfaction.

In the growth of the young child, if the environment is adequate, he finds satisfaction. He likes what is familiar to him. He trusts his parents if they are trustworthy. This is a safeguard against fear. For fear is with us always, either in actuality or potentiality. And though fear is not dissipated, at least we can "take it" better if we have someone beside us whom we trust. This is the function of parents, and is their main job through the first eleven or twelve years. That is to say, there should be at least one person, and it is better if there are two, whom the child can trust. The family makes for trust, depending, of course, on how the members behave. If they do not behave in a way to inspire trust, they do not provide a safeguard against fear, no matter how familiar they are to the child. One of the jobs of parents is to behave in such a way that trust can evolve within the child. An intangible relationship is built up day after day, and sometimes is dissipated through a thoughtless word. Then it takes time to build it up again. One thing we have learned is that the casual "I wish you had never been born," or "Shall we give him to the milkman?" or "Gosh, you're a darned nuisance," are things which can be

*Dr. Blatz felt that he was addressing an audience which was familiar with these terms. The appetites are: hunger, thirst, rest, elimination, change, and sex. The attitudes are: approach and withdrawal, which develop into likes and dislikes. The emotions are fear and anger. (See Blatz, W. E.—*Understanding the Young Child*, Clarke Irwin, 1944.)

said to a husband, wife, or sister, but never to children. Later their conversation will show that they have been worrying about such remarks which parents have already forgotten because they didn't mean them.

If, as the child grows up, he can develop a trust in the parent—a feeling that he is a “rock of ages”—and if the parent never betrays the child, he has succeeded in being a good parent, if nothing else. This is the bed rock of parental care. It should be foremost in our minds as parents.

Now if parents are going to do this, they will appear to their children as rather dull people; after all, if they are too exciting, their behaviour cannot be predicted and they cannot be trusted.

But as the child grows up, it is necessary for him to develop trust and confidence in others outside his own family. Here we are looking forward to the time when he derives his solace and security not from his parents but from his contemporaries, and eventually from his own mate. If he is going to be able to make this transfer, his relationship with his parents will necessarily undergo a change. We call this change emancipation.

If being trustworthy is the parents' first job, the second is emancipation, and it is an extremely difficult one. It is “tough” for a parent to give up being the person to whom the child runs for solace. But, in compensation, the parent can, as the child develops, afford to be a little more *interesting*, a little less the dull familiar element, and more a companion.

We mentioned earlier that children develop wants. Sometimes in attempting to satisfy these wants they become angry because anger stems from wanting something and not being able to get it. This is true of both adults and children. But when adults are angry they are able to control their expression of it. This is what the child has to learn to do and it is the parents' responsibility to help him learn. One of the ways we can help the child is to allow him to be angry in legitimate ways such as aggression, enthusiasm, and “pep” in games. It is difficult but important for the parent to help the child learn to channel his enthusiasm in playing games without being too concerned about winning. We want the child to learn to play in such a way that other children will want to play with him again. And we want to help the child to enjoy competition in games whether he wins or loses.

There is another side to the training in emotional situations. Obviously we want children to have ambition—to want strongly, hence to be willing to work, and through work gain satisfaction. But the question is, how much ambition? If a person is so ambitious that he works twenty-four hours a day to get what he thinks he wants, he will be disappointed in either achieving or failing. On the surface, such a person may *appear* to be the kind of citizen we want because he is “into everything.” But on thinking it over we'll see that we don't want him to want *everything*. It

is enough if an individual gets sufficient satisfaction that he isn't disappointed most of the time. Notice how vaguely we have to state the premise! How much is "most of the time?"

Perhaps most of the unhappiness in this world is caused by individuals who have made themselves false goals—work, work, work—and having arrived at their goals, have discovered they aren't what they want. False goals are largely described in terms of the position an individual holds with his colleagues, family, community—that is to say, by his status. We have all been brought up to want to "beat" somebody. But such an ambition, when it permeates a person's life, does not lead to mental well-being. It is difficult to eradicate this from our communities. Somehow we have to help our children work towards goals for the inner satisfaction the goals themselves bring, and not to set up, however indirectly, the goal of always being better than someone else.

We used to think that the kind of adult a child eventually became was determined by the first five years of his life. We now know that the next period, roughly the years five to twelve, is extremely important in determining to what extent he will be a conformist or a non-conformist, whether he will be a delinquent or not. If we have made mistakes in the first five years (and goodness knows we all make them) these mistakes are not irreparable, because behaviour *can* be modified. It is the second span that determines the direction, that crystallizes what has been started in the first span. If we are not satisfied with what we have done in the first five years, then we have to change. Either way, we must accept the consequences of our behaviour.

Accepting the consequences of one's behaviour is sometimes very difficult. Sometimes (and this is often done), it is possible to get around this difficulty by passing the responsibility over to a deputy agent. The deputy agent may be another person; or it may be a psychological device such as rationalization or compensation; or it may be a retreat into illness. To the extent that a person uses deputy agents to escape the consequences of his own behaviour, to that extent he is not mentally healthy. This idea is sometimes expressed by saying a person is neurotic.

One thing we have learned through studies is that all preschool children use all deputy agents. There isn't a single deputy agent, or, if you like, a neurotic form of behaviour that you can't find in all preschool children. What does this mean? The hypothesis is that as the child grows up, and depending on how we handle him during this period, he will discover the deputy agents he finds most effective; that he will continue to use them during adolescence; and that, unless something is done to make it easier for him to see what he is doing, these deputy agents will become crystallized.

If the deputy agents or neurotic devices are present in quantity, we

have serious psychotic conditions. Note that the hypothesis embraces the view that mental ill health is *quantitative*. That is to say, it does not resemble a physical disorder such as measles or typhoid fever.

Not only is mental illness quantitative, but the extent to which an individual is unhealthy is a function of the extent to which he tries to escape the consequences of his behaviour. The kind of mental ill-health that he is going to manifest is a function of the kind of deputy agent which he found useful and which crystallized between five and ten years of age, which became more manifest in adolescence, and finally, in adult life, became part of his personality. But let me emphasize, the past is not irrevocable. The treatment of all mental ill-health is re-education.

But, needless to say, the most promising course in mental health is prophylaxis. If we could only know how to bring up children, and how to make this knowledge available to the most important people, the parents, we could almost guarantee that no person would get to the point where deputy agents were disabling.

Parent Education is an important part of the program for mental well-being, and it is my hope that this conference has contributed further insights.

JOHN GEORGE ALTHOUSE

An Appreciation

FOR THE RECORD. The late Dean Althouse (to many of us he will be remembered as Dean), in addition to the many posts and responsibilities he undertook, was also closely associated with the Institute of Child Study.

During his deanship of Ontario College of Education he was for a time Chairman of the Board of the Institute. The meetings of the Board were often held in his office on Bloor Street.

After he left for the unique post of Director of Education for the Province of Ontario, he maintained his interest in the Institute. His advice on administrative and other matters was always helpful. He was always a friend.

It should also be recorded that he was elected a member of the Cleveland Conference—a discussion group of American Educators which met annually at Cleveland to discuss the problems of education in its narrowest and broadest references. He was one of three Canadians to be included among this distinguished group.

The Institute of Child Study feels honoured that the late Dean was associated with its early history and mourns his untimely death.

W.E.B.

BOOK REVIEWS

COMMENT.....

Some books are written essentially for entertainment and some for edification. A great number, and perhaps most being written today, manage happily to meld these two goals.

In this issue of THE BULLETIN, the Book Review Section includes reviews of a picture story book for pre-schoolers, a story for teen-age boys, three Learn-Now-and-Know-How books about: birds, music and sound, and a pre-review of a "must" manual for teachers and all others interested in social development.

A variety of books is received periodically and requested sporadically for review consideration. Books received for review are circulated among the Institute staff members, with pointers in the general direction of those handy "experts" considered "most likely to comment critically, constructively". With a nursery and an elementary school, a research division, a parent education division, and graduate student training in operation under the direction of Institute staff members, the Book Review editor feels that a fairly wide variety of experts is, in fact, handy. On occasion, professional associates considered more specifically expert in special areas of interest are asked, encouraged, yea -- entreated! to comment on particular books received for review. The fact is that BULLETIN reviewers are many and varied and varied both in skill and interest.

Reviews, not unlike reviewers, differ in many respects: some are short and curt; some are long and lyrical; some are saccharine, others caustic; some are read, others not.

The Book Review editor would appreciate an expression of the opinion of readers about the selection of books reviewed and the way they may most pleasurably and profitably be reviewed.

We aim to be read! and to be read with pleasure and profit.

Big Little Davy, by LOIS LENSKI. Oxford University Press,
New York, 1956. Pp. 48, \$1.75.

The life story of Davy, old friend of many very young "readers", is told with Lois Lenski's uncluttered charm. Page by page, Davy grows in story and pictures from a tiny baby to a five year old schoolboy. Throughout, the book is clear, concise and clever, with one idea and one picture to a page. Suitable for two and three year olds, BIG LITTLE DAVY bridges the gap between picture books and more complex stories.

Dorothy I. McKenzie.

Out of the Strong, by STEPHANI & EDWARD GODWIN. Oxford University Press, N. Y., 1956. Pp. 183, \$3.25.

This is a story of two boys, Leon and Brutus, brought up in a Christian home just after the time of Christ. It presents the conflicts that life holds for young teen-agers under Roman rule and tells how these two arrive at their different solutions.

Presented as a vividly descriptive adventure tale, OUT OF THE STRONG is recommended, especially for boys from twelve to fifteen.

David Bain.

Wonders of the Bird World, by HELEN G. CRUICKSHANK;
photographs by ALAN D. CRUICKSHANK. Dodd, Mead &
Co., New York, 1956. Pp. 95, \$2.75.

This book is written for children but is fascinating for anyone who wishes to become a bird watcher. The author encourages learning by observation and tells how we can find out about the habits of birds by observing their physical structure. She describes the different types of beaks, wings, legs and feet of birds, and deals with speed of flight. (The tiny ruby-throated humming bird travels easily between the speeds of 45 and 55 miles per hour!) The chapter on migration

gives some amazing information. (The Arctic terns travel on both sides of the Atlantic and their journeys during a year take them as far as 23,000 miles!)

The first bird is described. There are chapters on feathers and bird banding. Conservation is discussed and we feel regretful that some species of birds have become extinct because of man's ignorance. At the same time, it is thrilling to learn that the beautiful snow egret has been rescued from extinction through knowledge and use of conservation methods.

The photographs are magnificent! They are contributed by the author's husband, Alan Cruickshank, who is a well-known ornithologist and photographer.

WONDERS OF THE BIRD WORLD should be an inspiration for nature and geography projects in the classroom, and in the home it will find a place with a recognized bird guide.

Flora Morrison.

Music Dictionary, by MARILYN KORNREICH DAVIS, in collaboration with ARNOLD BRIODO; illustrated by WINNIFRED GREENE. Doubleday & Co., Inc., N. Y., Toronto, 1956. Pp. 63, \$4.00.

The immediate thought of the reviewer, on picking up this dictionary, was, "If I'd only had something like this in my early years of music!" In those days, a music dictionary meant "Groves", which was rather tough-going for a beginning musician. This new dictionary is attractively and sometimes humourously illustrated with carefully accurate drawings and limits itself to terms and expressions most commonly encountered. A wealth of further useful details are included, such as: phonetic pronunciations of the hard-to-pronounce and foreign words, brief histories of the development of the string, brass and wood instrument families, descriptions of instruments with their use and range, explanations of different forms of music (including jazz), and dances. This will be a useful reference book for the whole family.

Nan Foster.

The Magic of Sound, written and illustrated by LARRY KETTELKAMP. George J. McLeod, Ltd., Toronto, 1956. Pp. 64, \$2.35.

THE MAGIC OF SOUND should be made known to all children. It is full of intrigue; a fascinating exploration into the world of science. All the examples presented so clearly in the book can be demonstrated with material available in every kitchen or workshop. Mr. Kettelkamp has shown us that the study of sound can be a delight to the school age child.

Priscilla Bartels.

SOCIOMETRIC TESTING: A GUIDE FOR TEACHERS, by Mary L. Northway and Lindsay Weld, is being published this Spring. Price: \$1.95. Advance orders should be sent to the University of Toronto Press, Toronto.

This booklet is written for the teacher, counsellor or nursery school supervisor who wants to know more about the social relationships of her children. It describes how to construct, administer, score and interpret a sociometric test and suggests ways by which teachers can help develop rich social experiences in the classroom.

The suggestions given are the outgrowth of the authors' wide experience in using sociometric testing in schools and camps, enriched by ideas emerging from the longitudinal programme of sociometric testing in progress at the Institute of Child Study.

In effect a Do-It-Yourself manual, SOCIO-METRIC TESTING promises to be widely used and appreciated.

Child study books for this spring

BLINDNESS IN CHILDREN

by Miriam Norris, Patricia J. Spaulding
and Fern H. Brodie

This book contains essential information for anyone with responsibility for or interest in blind children. Teachers, administrators, social workers, pediatricians, and others will find in this remarkable report a new understanding of blind children and a confirmation of the idea that blind children in preschool years require no special therapy but can—if treated as children in general are treated—grow up in a normal way. No previous report, based upon objective data and presented in objective terms, has ever dealt with such a large group of preschool-age children, and no report has even studied blind children so soon after birth. 160 pages. \$3.00

EDUCATION FOR GIFTED CHILDREN

by Robert F. De Haan and Robert J. Havighurst

Many new programs are under way in the United States for the education of gifted children. Teachers and administrators in charge of these programs will find in this book an excellent discussion of their problems and will be able to use it as a handbook for setting up these programs. Professors De Haan and Havighurst also discuss identifying intellectually gifted students. 328 pages. \$5.00

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